

## **Minority Report on Select Board Budget Positions**

### **Hwei-Ling Greeney**

Here are my thoughts about 1.) the Elementary Schools budget, and 2. )the Transportation budget that I expressed at the May 3 Select Board meeting.

1.) Elementary Schools budget: I did not support the budget. To avoid possible downgrade of Moody's rating of the Town's ability to borrow funds in the market, Finance Committee, in its memo dated February 13, 2006, urged the Select Board, Town Manager, Amherst School Committee, Superintendent of Schools, Jones Library Trustees, and Library Director that, "Any state aid above the total amount provided in the Governor's January 24, 2006 budget proposal should be put in reserves rather than spent". Select Board vote basically disregards the principle. It puts Town's future financial health in jeopardy.

Moody could downgrade Town's bond rating 1.) if the reserves fall below a certain percentage of the general funds reserves, 2.) if the Town has no specific financial plan, and 3.) if Town has a specific plan but does not stick with it. We need to maintain our reserves and stay with the course. Any state aid above the governor's budget proposal should be put in reserves. I would support increasing Elementary Schools budget with additional revenues generated via user fees surcharge (e.g, user fees for park pavilions, user fees for school parking, etc.).

2.) Transportation budget: I did not support the budget. I found the ridership for the outreach buses (Gatehouse Road, West Street, and Pine Street) is too low to justify the funding. Overall ridership per run in these routes often is in the single digit. I don't support increasing parking fines or meter fees by \$84,558 to support these routes. By increasing parking fines and fees two years in a row, we will further the perception that Amherst does not support downtown businesses. I fear that the Town is using parking as a cash cow and we are milking it to death.